

## Improve and Progress

This article actually started out as an email to an athlete that I train. Initially it was intended to help put “life” into perspective—I’m now getting old and giving “life” advice. Understand that getting where you want to go in life is about progress and action. Take action to help you get where you want to go. Over time this action leads to slow and steady progress and eventually the culmination of where you want to be. Examples can be specific to you in any form possible. Use your imagination and apply the thoughts to your own individual situation.

A few things to keep in mind on a daily basis (maybe print this out and keep it handy, or type it up and keep it handy, ie look at it DAILY!):

*1) Life is not about 3 days worth of progress. It's about continual growth and climbing.* Move one foot in front of the other every single day. Get a little bit better everyday and that adds up to a LOT better over longer periods of time. Think about it this way. If you add 5 lbs to your squat every week for a year, you will have increased your squat over 250lbs!!! Think about that...5 lbs doesn't seem like much, but over time it seems HUGE. Imagine yourself with 250lbs on your squat...(this is just a hypothetical example of progress—don't expect 250lbs on your squat within a year unless you are just starting out.)

\*Imagine yourself improving your time in a race by small increments. No improvements are made instantly. While some may occur on the spot, it is typically the culmination of a handful of skills and efforts that just happen to meet at one given point in time.

*2) This is where it gets tough. You won't see results every single day.* In other words, you may work really really hard and not get any minutes in the game(s). That doesn't mean you aren't getting better or that your coaches aren't noticing that you're getting better; it means you may have to keep working so that the accumulation of those "5lbs" add up to the "250lbs,." The problem with your progress is that you don't know where coach wants you to be; it may only be "10lbs" of improvement or it may be "250lbs" worth of improvement. Most likely it is somewhere in between. You won't know where he wants you if you decide to stop short. What about if you stop at 5lbs of improvement, but coach only wanted to see "10lbs?" You would only be 1 week away from reaching your goal, but never actually reach the goal. Worst of all, you were so close all along, but you decide to pack it in when you were 99% there.

\*You never know where or when things will happen for you in life. In the matter of about 3 weeks, I went from almost leaving the field of performance training to having a waiting list of the best athletes in the state. Had I decided to stop training, I would never be where I am today. If I would have stopped just one day earlier than I did; I may not be writing to you right now as a strength coach. Instead I kept pushing on and eventually all of my hard work and time paid off with what seemed to be overnight success.

3) *You are in a great situation to play more!!! EARN YOUR PLAYING TIME.* I'm not saying you don't work hard, but remember, working hard and earning your minutes are two different things. How can you make your team better? Can you answer that question...why should you be out there before someone else? Is it that you're a better communicator, shooter, playmaker, understand the offense, you're a great on the ball defender...what is it? You tell me you're better than the kids who play, but why? Do you have an answer? If so, tell me. I think you feel like you deserve to play, but I'm not sure if you know why?

\*You will find that in the “real world” it is more about making the people you are around better, than it is being the most talented person. No one wants the most talented employee who only can make him/her self better. They want someone who will make the business or the team better. Do things that elevate the people around you. That is more than hard work alone.

4) *You know what you're doing wrong!* Often times you don't even realize that you actually know why things aren't going well. “I didn't run well because I didn't sleep much the night before.” Great! Now that the problem is solved, fix it! Sleep more. Don't be your own worst enemy. If you know why you're not getting to where you want to go, then rearrange your priorities. Understand that optimal levels of success take sacrifice. Unfortunately, you can't expect to do the same things as your average person but expect to make it to extraordinary places.

Change your mental approach today. If your mentality is what is holding you back, you've got to change how you think. You've got to believe in (Insert Name Here) as a person first, then an athlete. Don't beat yourself down and don't critique yourself. That's what your coach is for. You need to keep building yourself up. Coach will usually keep you in check, but you have to be your biggest fan. If you don't believe you're the best athlete in the game/event, no one else will.

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